

Without attempting to supply final answers to the difficult questions involved, it sets out with remarkable lucidity the moral problems which arise out of political crimes of this nature.

D. C. POTTER

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. By Percy M. Young. (Dennis Dobson; 18s.)

Vaughan Williams is such a rich character in his personality, his views, and his many activities, that there is always a strong temptation for critics to discuss these rather than his music, or at best to discuss his music as a reflection of these. This book is to be welcomed because it places the music first and sets out to discuss it objectively and impartially. Unlike many of the composer's admirers, Dr Young is prepared to admit that it is possible to dislike Vaughan Williams' music and to disagree with some of his opinions without being a moron, a degenerate or a traitor. Even so, he insists, it is impossible not to *respect* the music of Vaughan Williams. The object of this book is to show why this is so.

Dr Young has many of the qualities needed for the task he has undertaken: a wide knowledge of his subject; a real sympathy with it; a critical faculty which is not disarmed by partiality; and great experience as a practical musician. Only one thing more was required: an ability to write. It is strange that while Vaughan Williams himself writes so well, in a simple, direct style, most of the people who write about him do so with self-conscious, 'literary' elaboration. One can understand this in the professional critics who have to disguise that they have nothing of any importance to say, but it is quite unforgivable in a man like Dr Young. Certain mannerisms of construction are irritating, but no worse. What is much more serious is the author's habit of confusing his readers and possibly himself by flights of involved but vague and unhelpful philosophic and literary allusion. At best these give an appearance of saying a great deal more than they really do; occasionally they end up as near or complete nonsense. An interesting and useful book, but a disappointing one, because economy and discipline would have made it so much better.

E.T.

A HANDFUL OF AUTHORS. By G. K. Chesterton; edited by Dorothy Collins. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Though there are many felicities and fireworks here, it is doubtful whether the cumulative effect of these essays warrants their publication in book form. It would be a very great pity if they were to fall into the hands of some young creature unfamiliar with Chesterton's major work, and make him judge and dismiss it all as irrelevant and out of date. For it is with a feeling of 'for old sake's sake' that the reader must set himself to this volume of collected pieces. Throughout its pages he will remember that here is the journalistic output of a mind matured before the first

world war, that the nature of journalism is its concern with the passing day, and that that day is dated. The climate of thought in which this writing ripened is just familiar enough to generate the impatient sense that 'we've had it', and not yet temporally so remote as to arouse curiosity. We do not live in times of smug serenity, or have to rebel against the doctrines of rationalist liberalism. Many of the writers taken seriously fifty years ago are almost forgotten: W. E. Henley boasting before the advent of total war or analytical psychology that 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul'; that mannered and intolerable bore Meredith (as a novelist); and, alas, W. W. Jacobs. Mark Twain is remembered now less as a Great American Humorist than as the creator, in many other dimensions than humour, of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn; which latter makes one doubt whether Mr Chesterton can have been right in believing that he fought for the South in the Civil War.

The articles on Lear and Carroll are perennially fresh—if only their author could have lived to see these delightful Victorian grotesques acclaimed in France as 'the fathers of English surrealism'! There are penetrating remarks about Dickens, Thackeray, Sherlock Holmes, Romantic Love, and Ibsen's problem plays (as written on 'one assumption—that all the people had plenty of money'). But the general impression remains that most of the material used in this volume might rather have served as a quarry for an anthology of epigrams.

RENEE HAYNES

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER AND CRIME. By W. Lindsay Neustatter, M.D. (Christopher Johnson; 2 is.)

THE TRIAL OF JOHN GEORGE HAIGH. Edited by Lord Dunboyne. (Notable British Trials: William Hodge; 15s.)

In no field have the claims of psychology been so confidently asserted, and as confidently resisted, as in that of criminology. Amidst much careless talk, seized on as it is by the appetite of the Sunday newspapers, one popular conclusion emerges: that the role of the psychologist is to find esoteric reasons to excuse the criminal or to diminish his responsibility. It is deplorable that it should be so, but perhaps the psychologists are not without blame. They speak a language which is without real meaning to the uninitiated and they assume too readily an acceptance of the premisses they work from. There was need for a summary, in intelligible language, of the main psychological disorders and their possible relation to various classes of crime, which should give to lawyers, social workers and indeed anyone concerned with criminals actual or potential, the basis for reasoned judgment on a subject that demands an absence of passion or prejudice. This need Dr Neustatter's book supplies. Himself an experienced psychiatrist, with a specialised knowledge of prisons and approved schools, he brings to his task a balance and clarity which are admirable. For the most